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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2697
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1062
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3084
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2470
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001017

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ ELECTION BODY'S MISSING HEAD

REF: A. BISHKEK 970

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 897

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Classified By: Acting DCM Robert Burgess, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Kyrgyz opposition leaders on September 26 held a press conference to announce the resignation of Central Election Commission (CEC) head Klara Kabilova. They released a videotaped statement by Kabilova in which she claimed that President Bakiyev's son Maxim had threatened her over the October 5 local elections. The opposition leaders added that Kabilova and her family had fled the country; it appears that she may be in Moscow possibly applying for asylum. The Prosecutor General has begun an investigation into "Videogate," and he has already questioned Maxim Bakiyev and reportedly plans to question the President's Chief of Staff and opposition leaders over Kabilova's claims. This turn of events seems to have surprised the government, but leaves lingering questions about why a dispute over a local election candidate should involve such high-level personalities and drama. End Summary.

Elections, Threats and Videotape

[1](#)2. (SBU) In a September 26 press conference, opposition leaders Omurbek Tekebayev, Roza Otunbayeva, Bakyt Beshimov, Cholpon Jakupova, and Temir Sariyev released a videotaped statement by Central Election Commission (CEC) head Klara Kabilova. In the video, Kabilova claimed that President Bakiyev's son Maxim pressured and insulted her after the CEC approved the candidacy of Ishenbay Kadyrbekov for the October 5 local council elections. Kadyrbekov, a former Chairman of the State Agency for Architecture and Construction, is currently in detention awaiting trial on corruption charges.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In the video, Kabilova also announced her resignation from her CEC post. The opposition leaders added that Kabilova and her family had fled Kyrgyzstan because of threats to their safety. Immediately after the press conference, the CEC stated that Kabilova had not fled the

country, but rather was on an official mission to observe elections in Belarus.

An Incompetent Leader

14. (SBU) Later on September 26, President Bakiyev officially dismissed Kabilova from her position and appointed her deputy, Damir Lisovskiy, as the acting CEC head. Lisovskiy lashed out against his former boss, saying that Kabilova was an "incompetent leader" and that her failure to submit cost estimates for the local elections resulted in their absence in the 2008 budget. He also denied her claims that anyone harassed or exerted pressure on her. A subsequent press report quoted CEC staff in Minsk as saying that Kabilova had fallen ill in Moscow, and had not arrived in Minsk.

Videogate

15. (SBU) On September 29, Kyrgyz Prosecutor General Elmurza Satybaldiyev announced that he had opened a criminal investigation of "Videogate," as it is already known, and that he would question Maxim Bakiyev, President Bakiyev's Chief of Staff Medet Sadrykulov, and the five opposition leaders. Satybaldiyev said that opposition members would be asked how Kabilova explained her actions when she handed over the video recording, and added that Kabilova was in no danger, because her statement was a "guarantee of her safety." On September 30, Satybaldiyev advised the media that Maxim Bakiyev had been questioned for an hour. According to press accounts, Maxim Bakiyev claimed that he

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had never spoken with Kabilova on the phone or visited the CEC.

Comment

16. (C) Given the initial CEC comment that Kabilova was on an official trip and then President Bakiyev's subsequent notice that he had fired her, it is clear that Kabilova's videotaped resignation was a surprise to most government officials. Kabilova's apparent reliance on the opposition to release news of her resignation is striking given her role in blocking opposition party Ata Meken from securing seats in December's parliamentary elections. While Kabilova's disappearance remains the subject of much speculation, it has not disrupted preparations for the October 5 local council elections.

17. (C) While Embassy has not heard of any public remarks from Kabilova since the videotape's release, some Embassy contacts report that Kabilova is in Moscow pursuing an asylum claim.
GFOELLER